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Canada

Wine

EU To Open Its Borders To Canadian Ice Wine

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Report Highlights:

The EU is expected to adopt the necessary legislative changes to allow Canadian ice wine to be sold in the EU. The process is expected to be completed in a few weeks.

The announcement represents an important step in the ongoing discussions between Canada and the European Commission on resolving issues related to wine and spirits, noting it will facilitate further progress in future discussions.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Ottawa [CA1], CA

The following is taken from an Agriculture and Agri-food Canada press release.

EU TO OPEN BORDERS TO CANADIAN ICEWINE

OTTAWA, March 1, 2001 - Years of efforts by the federal and provincial governments and the Canadian wine industry paid off today when Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vancilief and International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew announced Canadian icewine will be granted access to the important European market.

The European Commission is expected to adopt the necessary legislative changes to allow the wines to be sold in the European Union (EU). The process is expected to be completed in a few weeks.

"I want to acknowledge the important role the Canadian wine industry has played in developing the icewine standards necessary to meet European Community quality requirements," said Minister Vancilief. "The federal government will continue to rely on the cooperation of the industry and the provinces in working out final technical details on this matter."

"I am very happy to see this unique Canadian export find its way onto European tables," said Minister Pettigrew. "This achievement is another indication of continuing good relations between Canada and the European Union."

Canada has become a global leader in producing its award-winning icewine -- a sweet dessert wine made from grapes left to freeze on the vine. Securing access for Canadian wine has been a key priority for Canada.

The ministers described the announcement as representing an important step in the ongoing discussions between Canada and the European Commission on resolving issues related to wine and spirits, noting it will facilitate further progress in future discussions towards agreement.

Comment: About 90 percent of Canadian ice wine is made in Ontario, the remainder comes from British Columbia. Sales of ice wine in Ontario in 1997 (the most recent data available) totaled about \$C3.7 million. While the industry is small, there is strong national pride in Canadian ice wine. In 1999, the Wine Council of Ontario had urged Ottawa to launch a trade complaint against the EU concerning the EU ban on ice wine. At the time, Canadian trade officials preferred to pursue a bilateral agreement covering all wine and spirits, rather than risking losing access for all wine because of a confrontation on ice wine.

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